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Birds in Yosemite Valley in September

September is a most propitious month for observing a great variety of birds in Yosemite Valley. With autumn colors beginning to show in oaks, maples, dogwoods and willows it is also most enjoyable. Through the kindness of Mr. Walter Fitzpatrick, assistant postmaster in the Valley, our field trips on September 27 and 30 were most pleasant and worthwhile.

Before going out on the first trip we consulted a composite list of birds of the Valley kept by Mr. Fitzpatrick for each month of the year from 1936 to 1940 when war duties interfered. It contained 108 species for the month of September alone. We checked some such as Golden Eagle, White-throated Swift, Pileated Woodpecker, Clark Nutcracker, Pigmy Owl, Townsend Solitaire, Green-tailed Towhee, Black-throated Gray Warbler and others, hoping our host would be able to show us some of them. Knowing in which particular location each was to be found, we made several trips to each of those places at different hours of the day. In the short time available half of those marked were seen besides thirty or more species not marked.

Climbing over fallen logs, walking over fragrant pennyroyal, and wading through four foot high equistums near the river bank we flushed out Fox Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, and Spotted Towhees. In near-by trees were Hairy Woodpeckers and Steller Jays. Finding Audubon Warblers in small willows near the river signified that the last of the warblers were now leaving the Valley and migrating to lower levels. Off shore a House Wren entertained us with rippling notes as it investigated all sides of a partly submerged stump. A Water Ouzel walked in and out of shallow water and teetered on rocks on the farther shore. A few evenings before we had been entranced by another Ouzel as it repeatedly sang an enchanting roundelay on a log in the stream.

Under some cottonwoods on the river bank near Leidig Meadows we spied a large four-prong buck leisurely feeding in the lush grasses along the opposite shore. It being a very hot noon hour, few birds were about. Yet some noisy California Woodpeckers and Steller Jays gathered acorns while a Sparrow Hawk made repeated sorties from some tall cottonwood trees to the meadow below.

On the 30th of September more visits were made to different sections of the River resulting in new finds such as the White-headed Woodpecker, Red-shafted Flicker, Brewer Blackbirds gathering in flocks preparatory to migration, a Belted Kingfisher, Lutescent Warblers, and a Red-breasted Sapsucker hiking

itself up and around the trunk of an oak looking for insect food.

On another trip to Leidig Meadows we saw Mountain Chickadees, a Brown Creeper, several Black-throated Gray Warblers, Pileolated Warblers, Lincoln Sparrows and again Spotted Towhees. We enjoyed watching a Red-tailed Hawk sailing over the meadow and then settling on a branch high up in a tall tree. Sharp-shinned Hawks were seen here also.

Going to the foot of the cliffs near Indian Canyon some Band-tailed Pigeons were seen quietly perched near the top of a cedar tree. We were thrilled when three Golden Eagles appeared wheeling about in the clear atmosphere above the cliffs near Washington Column, and to watch flocks of White-throated Swifts circle about, appearing and disappearing, high above the tallest trees near the top of the Yosemite Falls cliffs.

In visiting the old apple orchard near the stables we were startled by loud hammering and loud calls which we soon traced to those huge members of the woodpecker family, the Pileated Woodpeckers. As we watched they continued hunting for insects making the bark fly in large chips as they whacked away with their long chisel-like bills.

About 4 p.m. the sky became overcast. A hurried trip was made to Mirror Lake, which at this time of year is composed of a series of shallow ponds. The Clark Nutcracker was seen here. Three of these birds were calling and flying about among the tree tops. Among some willows flitted Golden-crowned Kinglets and Arkansas Goldfinches.

A quick trip was made to Rocky Point, where huge masses of granite had been shaken down from the face of El Capitan not so many years ago. We had tried that morning and tried again that afternoon to get some Rock Wrens and Pigmy Owls, who live there, to come out by imitating the owl's calls. Only one small quavering call came from one Pigmy Owl.

The last visit of the day was made to Yellow Pine Beach at a turn in the river, to trace a duck which had previously been spied winging its way up stream. It being the first duck of the season our host was eager to make a definite identification and to list it for the last day of the month of September. Sure enough at this turn in the river there appeared a lone female Mallard, calmly paddling past us up the middle of the stream, and not a bit alarmed. We saw her pass a Great Blue Heron standing on an islet of sand, gravel, and drift wood. A Belted Kingfisher startled from the bank near them shot upstream ahead of the Mallard.

By this time large drops of rain were falling. We drove quickly to the Lodge. As we thanked our host for his kindness and hospitality the deluge started. Lightning flashed, thunder crashed, and rain poured all night long, and next morning there was an added sound to all the tumult, that of water cascading over the cliffs of Yosemite Falls, where there had been not one drop of water the day before. The Merced River had risen at least one foot, Mirror Lake was full from shore to shore, and the trees at Glacier Point were powdered with a light fall of snow. The following day skies were still overcast, thunder still rumbled afar off, while flurries of rain kept us from going far afield. The only birds seen on a walk through the meadows leading to Old Village were the Steller Jays, some California Woodpeckers, and in the river near the bridge, the Water Ouzel.

Mr. Walter Fitzpatrick hopes that other Audubonites will visit the Valley, and he will be glad to welcome them and make their visits, as he did ours, enjoyable and profitable in birding.

—Clelia A. Paroni

Christmas Cenus — 1946

Due to the decrease in the number of various species of birds, the annual census to be held December 22, 1946 assumes greater importance than in previous years. Volunteers for this service are needed, as in the past, to carry on this important work if a satisfactory report is to be made to the National Audubon Society. Those desiring to assist should contact Miss Jean B. Fay, Mr. Arthur Myer or the Chairman of the Census. Members' cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

—Herman V. Lefler, *Chairman*

October Field Trip

“El Sobrante,” Mr. Walter W. Bradley’s cabin in the Contra Costa Hills, was the meeting place of forty-nine members of the Audubon Association of the Pacific on Sunday, October 20. Assisting the host was his sister, Mrs. Alice Bradley Jones, who served the guests a delightful picnic luncheon.

Many birds were observed at the pools and feeding stations. Others were found on the crest of the surrounding hills. After a day registering 85 degrees, many of the birds returned at eventide for refreshment at the pools. A flock of seven Western Bluebirds came to the pool, five remaining to bathe.

The birds observed at El Sobrante included: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, California Quail, Anna Hummingbird, Red-shafted Flicker, Nuttall Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Say Phoebe, Steller Jay, California Jay, Plain Titmouse, Bush-tit, Wren-tit, Bewick Wren, California Thrasher, Hermit Thrush, Mexican Bluebird (Western), Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hutton Vireo, Audubon Warbler, Western Meadowlark, Purple Finch, House Finch, Arkansas Goldfinch (Green-backed), Spotted Towhee, Brown Towhee, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Fox Sparrow and Song Sparrow.

—*Historian*, Mrs. Otis Smith

Observations

Edited by Junea W. Kelly

Water Ouzel, September 23, Big Sur, Frances J. Blake.

Least Bittern, September 29, Lake Merritt, Oakland, Mrs. Vce Curtis.

Western Tanager, (1), September 21, Berkeley Campus, Junea W. Kelly.

Northern Phalarope, (200), Wilson Phalarope, (4 or 5), Red Phalarope, (1), August 23, K. R. E. Pool, Berkeley Aquatic Park; White Pelicans, (53), August 25, circled the lake at about 500 ft. elevation, Lake Merritt, Oakland; American Egrets, (70), September 20, Berkeley Aquatic Park; Snowy Egrets, (5), Avocets, (about 300), October 16, Sears Point Cut-off, Herman V. Lefler.

Heermann Gulls, (2), Forster Tern, September 8, off Marina; Spotted Sandpiper, August 18, Middle Lake of Chain of Lakes, Golden Gate Park; Northern Phalaropes, (about 80), August 31, September 1, Elk Pool, Golden Gate Park, Mrs. Laura Stephens.

“Birds of California”

Twenty-five birds of California, reproduced in black and white, comprise the illustrated sections of the Pictorial Calendar to be published this year by Mills

College. Mrs. Glenn Hoover is the photographer who has captured for a moment many fascinating subjects. They include birds of the coast, the inner valleys, and the southern counties of California. As it is believed that members of the Audubon Association will welcome this calendar as a timely gift suggestion, a representative has been invited to show sample pages at the November meeting.

October Meeting

On Thursday, October 11, 1946, forty members and guests of the Audubon Association of the Pacific met at 8:00 p. m. in the Oakland Public Museum. This was the first east-bay meeting of the Audubon Association and was also the first meeting held in the lecture room at the Oakland Public Museum under the curatorship of Miss Alice Mulford.

The meeting was opened by the president, Miss Jean Bradford Fay. Mr. Walter W. Bradley, vice-president, read the minutes of the September meeting.

Miss Mulford presented a very interesting discussion of the work which goes on behind the scenes in a museum, following which we were taken on a conducted tour through the museum's exhibit halls. Of special interest were the mounted specimens of local birds.

November Meeting

The 350th meeting of the Audubon Association will be held on Thursday, November 14 at 8:00 p. m. in the Assembly Room of the San Francisco Public Library, at Larkin and McAllister Streets. Miss Joanne Taylor, Supervisor of Student Activities at the California Academy of Sciences will explain the student program as carried out at the Academy. Exhibits, including models of extinct birds, made by the students will be displayed. Meet at the Lotus Bowl, 626 Grant Avenue, at 6:00 p. m. for a non-host dinner preceding the meeting.

November Field Trip

The November field trip will be held on Sunday, November 17, with Mrs. Wayne Henrie as leader. Meet at the Greyhound Bus Depot at 7th and Mission Streets and buy a round-trip ticket to Stinson Beach. Take the 8:25 a. m. bus to Stinson Beach. After a walk on the beach, the party will take the 1:55 p. m. bus to Mountain Home, walk from the crest to Mill Valley where the bus may be taken back to San Francisco. Bring luncheon and binoculars.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

For the Study and the Protection of Birds

President.....	Miss Jean Bradford Fay.....	2312 Leavenworth St., San Francisco 11
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	Monthly meetings second Thursday, 8:00 p. m.	

Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Sts., San Francisco
Membership dues, payable January 1st, \$3.00 per year

Student memberships, \$1.50 per year

Life memberships, \$50.00